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**Committee for Programme and Coordination**

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**Draft report**

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**Addendum****Coordination questions: progress report on the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001 (item 5 (b))**

1. At its 9th meeting, on 4 June 1998, the Committee considered the progress report of the Secretary-General entitled "Mid-term review of the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001" (E/CN.6/1998/3). It also had before it a note by the Secretary-General on the implementation of the revised system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001 (E/1998/10) and a letter dated 27 April 1998 from the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women to the Chairperson of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (E/AC.51/1998/8).

**Discussion**

2. It was emphasized that the system-wide medium-term plan serves as an effective monitoring and coordination tool at all levels. Appreciation was expressed for the preparation of the progress report, which was considered informative, comprehensive and insightful. It was recognized that the report demonstrated growing support for active gender-mainstreaming policies in the United Nations system.

3. Appreciation was expressed for the efforts of many organizations and entities of the United Nations system to implement the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action, in particular programmes directed towards the empowerment of women, as reflected in the progress report. Appreciation was further expressed for the gender-mainstreaming efforts of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United



Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). It was recognized that their programmes were directed towards empowerment, education and training, and employment of women.

4. Requests were made for additional information on certain areas of United Nations programming, including education of women and girls as it related to increased productivity and lower fertility, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and female genital mutilation.

5. It was suggested that emphasis should be placed on paragraph 11 of the report, which focuses on the impact of armed conflict on women, especially in foreign occupied areas that have been declared disputed territories by the Security Council in its resolutions. Delegations also stressed the need to establish an international criminal court, with special attention to war crimes that affect women and girls.

6. Attention was drawn to the mandates given by the General Assembly to mainstream a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system. Reference was made in particular to paragraph 4 of resolution 52/100, in which the Assembly called upon Member States and the United Nations system to implement the Platform for Action, in particular by promoting an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective at all levels, including in the design, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes to ensure effective implementation of all critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action. The usefulness of Economic and Social Council agreed conclusion 1997/2 on gender mainstreaming was emphasized. It was noted that in paragraph 11 of resolution 52/100 the Committee had been requested by the Assembly to ensure that all programmes, medium-term plans and programme budgets visibly mainstream a gender perspective. Appreciation was expressed to the Inter-agency Committee for Women and Gender Equality for having made great progress in supporting the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the work of the United Nations system.

7. Regret was expressed that the financial crisis would adversely affect the implementation of the mandates for the advancement of women.

8. It was noted with great concern that progress in achieving gender balance in staffing seemed to suffer owing to the ongoing financial crisis and budget-cutting in the United Nations. It was emphasized that the interests and the rights of women needed to be reflected in staff development and career planning.

9. The view was expressed that the system-wide medium-term plan was ambitious, setting longer-term goals. It was felt that the report gave a candid analysis of the obstacles encountered in its effective and efficient implementation. Concern was expressed that satisfactory mainstreaming was still far from being achieved. It was reiterated that gender mainstreaming required integration of a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system. The view was expressed that while gender mainstreaming was a gradual process, it should be pursued diligently.

10. Great concern was expressed about the reported low level of commitment on the part of United Nations managers and a lack of attention by them to policies regarding women and gender.

11. Grave concern was also expressed about the low commitment on the part of some United Nations agencies to gender mainstreaming, as evidenced by the report. It was noted that some United Nations entities seemed to equate gender mainstreaming issues with gender

balance in staffing matters, resulting in a poor understanding of gender mainstreaming and its implications for programming.

12. The view was expressed that United Nations entities should strengthen their support to gender mainstreaming efforts at all levels, including the national level.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

13. The Committee endorsed the recommendations contained in the progress report (E/CN.6/1998/3, para. 52) and recommended that the Economic and Social Council approve them. The Committee recommended, in particular, that Member States take advantage of the recommendation contained in paragraph 52 (g), in which the use of expertise offered by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) was advised for the design, monitoring and evaluation of gender-responsive policies and programmes. The Committee also highlighted the recommendation in paragraph 52 (h) on employing inter-agency coordination mechanisms and bodies within the United Nations to promote an increasingly coordinated overall approach to gender mainstreaming.

14. The Committee took note of the comments made at the forty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women on the obstacles mentioned in the report. It recommended that measures should be taken to overcome the obstacles in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the system-wide medium-term plan.

15. The Committee recalled its own commitment by which it agreed to ensure, in its examination of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, that the mainstreaming of a gender perspective was reflected in the individual programmes of the medium-term plan and emphasized the responsibility of programme managers for progress in gender mainstreaming (A/51/16 (part I), para. 167). Accordingly, the Committee took note of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 52/100, in which the Assembly requested all bodies that deal with programme and budgetary matters, including the Committee for Programme and Coordination, to ensure that all programmes, medium-term plans and programme budgets visibly mainstream a gender perspective.

16. The Committee recommended that measures be taken to overcome institutional obstacles to gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system. It invited the entities of the United Nations system to place more emphasis on coordination and collaboration among themselves in that regard.

17. Commending the 34 entities of the United Nations system that had contributed to the preparation of the progress report, the Committee noted the absence of some key United Nations entities from the progress assessment. It recommended that all United Nations entities cooperate with the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women in monitoring the continued implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan.

18. The Committee recommended that entities of the United Nations system provide or increase gender analysis training to strengthen implementation of the system-wide plan and mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the United Nations system.

19. In recalling Economic and Social Council agreed conclusion 1997/2, the Committee recommended that all entities designate focal points to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan and mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the work of their respective entities.

20. The Committee recommended that efforts of the United Nations system to mainstream a gender perspective be further intensified, including the preparation of clear and practical guidelines for the implementation of Economic and Social Council agreed conclusion 1997/2. It further recommended development of performance indicators to allow the measurement of progress in the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan. The Committee called on all senior managers in the United Nations system to give high priority to gender mainstreaming, and, in this regard, to cooperate with, and seek the guidance of, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women.
  21. The Committee, in reiterating the goal of gender balance in staffing, re-emphasized that this goal should be achieved in accordance with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations and recommended the full and speedy implementation of section III.C of resolution 51/226 of 3 April 1997 and resolution 52/96 of 12 December 1997.
  22. The Committee agreed to consider the new draft system-wide medium-term for the advancement of women for the period 2002-2005, to be prepared by the Secretary-General in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, in the year 2000 (see Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/34).
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